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7 March 1952

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
FROM : Assistant Director for National Estimates
SUBJECT : Proposed National Intelligence Estimates

PROBLEM

To initiate appropriate National Intelligence Estimates to succeed and improve on NIE-25; Soviet Courses of Action through mid-1952.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

1. NIE-25 runs out on 30 June 1952 and is already out of date with respect to many areas and subjects, of which the major ones have been covered in separate estimates. There is, however, a clear need for an over-all estimate on this subject, to be published before 1 July and to cover the period through mid-1953.

2. Since the preparation of NIE-25 there has been a great deal of progress in intelligence on Soviet capabilities, particularly on the economic side. The pending EIC studies on the Soviet economy, now scheduled for completion in March and May for the two halves, will provide much valuable material. Work is also far advanced on NIE-60, Parts I and II, dealing with Soviet air defense and civil defense capabilities. On the specifically military side, the Board feels that there is a great need to re-examine and appraise presently accepted figures and judgments. For all of these reasons, the Board believes that there should be a separate estimate on Soviet capabilities for general war in the period through mid-1953 and that this estimate should be finished prior to the final stages of the revision of NIE-25.

3. In addition to this study of Soviet capabilities, the Board believes that there should be a basic long-term estimate on Soviet War Potential covering the period 1952 through 1955. No such study now exists. It would require, on the economic side, a projection of

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the pending EIC studies, supplemented by a substantial additional contribution from scientific intelligence. Such an estimate would serve an important policy purpose in its own right. In addition, its initiation at the present time would permit some of the advance conclusions, even if only tentative, to be used for purposes of the revision of NIE-25. It is clear that Soviet intentions through mid-1953 will depend not only on their capabilities within this period but also on their view of the trend of these capabilities for the succeeding years.

4. The NSC is now considering a revision of NSC 114, the basic over-all US policy, and Mr. Bohlen has requested an outline of a new approach, to which CIA is contributing. It is not clear that any new estimate will be required, but the possibility must be considered. The present target date for the revision of NSC 114 is 2 April 1952, though this date will undoubtedly be extended. An estimate for this revision might tend to cover the same ground as the proposed revision of NIE-25.

DISCUSSION

5. The Board feels strongly that the revision of NIE-25 should be completed only after the completion of the capabilities short-term study. It is therefore opposed to any other new broad paper in the immediate future (i.e., before about 15 June). If an immediate estimate is absolutely required for the revision of NSC 114, there exists SE-13: Probable Developments in the World Situation through Mid-1953, published 24 September 1951, and this could be examined and revised in minor respects. This estimate was prepared for the revision of NSC 114 in the fall of 1951. Though not satisfactory as a basic estimate of Soviet courses of action, it should substantially meet NSC needs.

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RECOMMENDATION

That the IAC be requested to approve the initiation of the following new estimates:

- a. NIE-63: Soviet Capabilities for General War through Mid-1953. Priority: High. Target date: 15 May.
- b. NIE-64: Probable Soviet Courses of Action through Mid-1953. Priority: High. Target date: 15 June.
- c. NIE-65: Soviet War Potential, 1952-55. Priority: Routine. Target date: 15 September.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

CONCURRENCES:

Assistant Director
Research and Reports

Deputy Director/Intelligence

ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

Date: _____

Approved (disapproved).

Director of Central Intelligence

O/NE: _____ :fd

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